

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness



Developed by
The Vermont Task Force on
Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2009, as a condition of the state's acceptance of federal stimulus funds under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*, principals and superintendents were surveyed regarding their districts' teacher and principal evaluation practices. Survey findings resulted in the creation of a statewide committee to develop an evaluation model that best reflects the values of Vermont's education system.

In March 2011, the State of Vermont Department of Education charged the *Vermont Task Force on Teacher & Leader Effectiveness* to develop guidelines for teacher and leader evaluation. Knowing and respecting the fiercely independent nature of Vermonters, Task Force members were committed to developing these guidelines for creating and assessing evaluation systems and not creating a plan or template for school districts to adopt. The Task Force recognizes the value of individual school districts developing their own systems through a collaborative process involving a variety of stakeholders. While the Task Force has provided sample frameworks for evaluation, as well as evaluation standards for both teachers and principals, no one approach or system is prescribed or suggested.

Building upon research and the work of other state Departments of Education (DOE) and National Education Association (NEA) affiliates, the Task Force developed a triangulated framework for teacher and principal evaluation with the ultimate goal of improving student growth and learning. Student growth and learning should be at the center of any educator's evaluation, as well as being the center—and driving force—of these guidelines.

The *Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness* includes a set of nine principles for effective evaluation, a general evaluation framework, samples of frameworks being used around the nation, evaluation standards for principals and teachers, levels of performance, a description of the evaluation cycle, and guidelines for implementation. The report presents an explanation and discussion of multiple indicators, as well as information about developing and supporting teachers and leaders through mentoring and peer assistance.

The *Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness* document was approved by the Vermont State Board of Education on June 18, 2012. The document is intended to clarify essential elements of a high-quality teacher and leader evaluation system and provide guidance as districts work to design or improve their evaluation systems. Teachers and leaders are critically important to the success of students. In the 2012-2013 school year, the Task Force will continue working on developing differentiated pathways for recognition, support and improvement and develop guidelines for continuous monitoring, support and improvement of evaluation system.

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INTRODUCTION

The Vermont Department of Education established the Vermont Task Force on Teacher & Leader Effectiveness in March 2011. The Director of Educator Quality, the President of Vermont-NEA and Vermont-NEA's Director of Professional Programs facilitated the monthly meetings from March 2011 to June 2012. The Task Force was comprised of education stakeholders including Department of Education staff, superintendents, principals, teachers, Vermont Principal's Association, Vermont-NEA, Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, Vermont School Boards Association, higher education representatives, a parent representative, and legislators (See Appendix A).

The purpose of the Task Force was to develop statewide teacher and leader evaluation guidelines that include the following elements:

- Standards to measure teacher and leader effectiveness (see definitions in Appendices)
- Valid and reliable methods of measurement
- Teacher and leader performance levels with descriptors for each of the levels
- Differentiated pathways for recognition, support and improvement (August 2012 – June 2013)
- Continuous monitoring, support and improvement of the evaluation system (August 2012 – June 2013)

***Student growth
and learning
are central to
an educator's
evaluation.***

The Task Force prepared these guidelines to assist Vermont school districts in developing local, effective teacher and leader evaluation systems that will improve teaching and learning by informing educators' professional practice.

The vast majority of teachers and leaders serve their students well, so a robust and meaningful evaluation system, developed collaboratively by teachers and administrators, can raise the bar for all and benefit students, teachers and leaders. Such a system, though not perfect, requires establishing a set of principles to guide the development and implementation process.

Sustaining a robust evaluation system that meaningfully differentiates performance and supports teacher and leader development does require significant investments of time, training, materials, and expertise. The goal is to design a system that provides sufficient evidence for appropriate decision-making but does not overwhelm the evaluator in evidence or data.

Teachers in leadership roles work in collaboration with principals and other school administrators by facilitating improvements in instruction and promoting practices among their peers that can lead to improved student growth and learning outcomes. In the future, members of this task force envision extending these guidelines to include *Teacher Leader Standards* for teachers in leadership roles.



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PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE EVALUATION

- 1** Safe and open collaboration is necessary. When assessment of teacher and leader practices is transparent and openly collaborative, teachers and leaders can build professional communities and learn from one another. This process can only occur in non-threatening environments of formative assessment and growth.
- 2** Measures of teacher and leader performance are most helpful and meaningful when they are based on levels of performance and measurable standards. Teachers and leaders need clear and actionable feedback based on standards that are comprehensive and transparent. Feedback is most useful as part of a comprehensive teacher and leader development system. Summative evaluations of teachers and leaders should be based primarily on standards of effectiveness required for all teachers and leaders.
- 3** Those who are consistently unable to meet the standards of practice, even with appropriate professional support, should be removed from their positions.
- 4** Integrated systems (e.g., recruitment, selection/placement, induction, professional learning, performance management and evaluation, and career continuum) must link evaluation procedures with curricular standards, professional learning activities, targeted support, and human capital decisions.
- 5** Teachers' and leaders' input (e.g., self-assessment, goal setting and self-reflection) in determining performance and learning outcomes should be part of the evaluation process.
- 6** While standards are essential, teachers and leaders should also help to define a set of practices and student growth and learning objectives to be assessed. Teacher and leader input can provide vital learning goals for the unique circumstances and context of each particular classroom and/or school.
- 7** Key decisions about assessment and evaluation systems need to be made as close to the local level as possible and in partnership with teachers and leaders and their representatives. Teacher and leader evaluation systems must be developed and implemented with teachers, leaders and their representatives through collective bargaining at the local level.
- 8** Evaluations must be fair, conducted by highly trained and objective supervisors or other evaluators, whose work is regularly reviewed to ensure the validity and reliability of evaluation results.
- 9** To satisfy these requirements, evaluation systems must be adequately funded and staffed, and fully developed and validated. All educators must be trained on the new system.



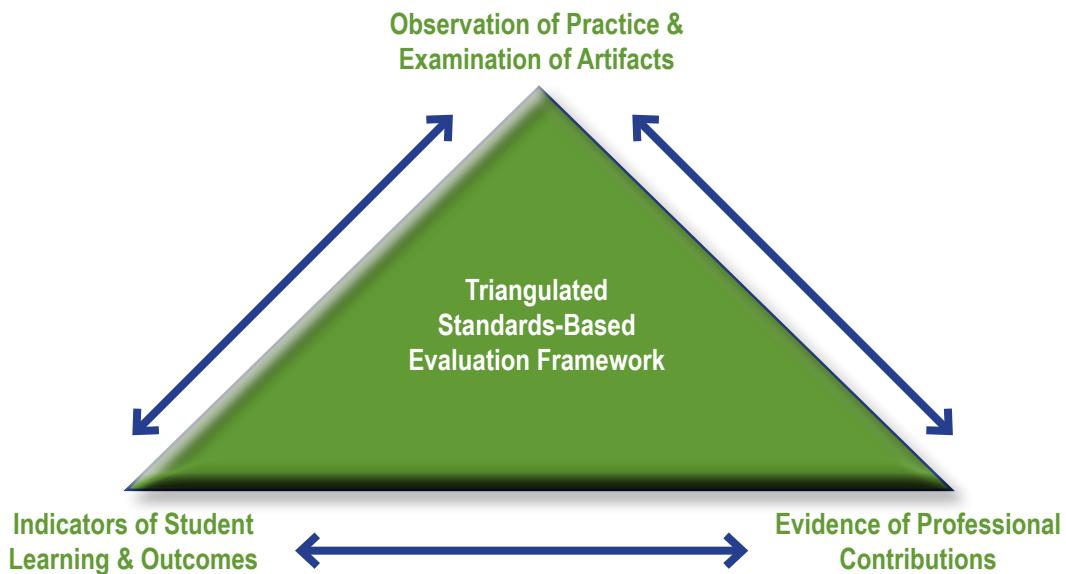
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EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The three elements of the triangulated framework are based on the belief that a highly effective evaluation system is based on the ultimate goal of improving student growth and learning. To ensure that teacher and leader evaluation is fair, valid, and reliable, student growth and learning will be based upon the Common Core State Standards, including curriculum, instruction and assessments.

The evaluation framework begins with observation of practice and examination of artifacts, but incorporates two more elements: validation by examining indicators of student growth and learning outcomes; and assessing evidence of professional contributions. The various elements are combined effectively to create a unified system. All three elements are essential for providing educators with the information they need to grow professionally and to improve student growth and learning. When combining observations with other indicators, the relationship to student outcomes becomes stronger, and better identifies teaching effectiveness.

Teacher & Leader Evaluation Framework



The entry point for this framework is the observation of practice and examination of artifacts in relation to the evaluation standards.

Multiple indicators of student growth and learning will be used to validate the judgments about practice made by administrators and peers through their observations of practice and examination of artifacts. For all educators, there will be at least three distinct indicators encompassing a variety of classroom, school, district and state assessments, as well as trends in growth scores, if applicable.



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Observation of Practice and Examination of Artifacts

There are several comprehensive teacher and leader evaluation frameworks that integrate multiple aspects of evaluation and education reform. These frameworks incorporate multiple indicators that provide educators with clear and actionable feedback in three areas: indicators of a teacher and leader's professional practice, indicators of a teacher and leader's contribution to school or district success, and indicators of a teacher's contribution to student growth and learning. These frameworks are frequently mentioned in research studies and policy reports, and they are viewed as innovative approaches to reforming teacher evaluation. These models may inform districts as they develop their own evaluation systems.

Sample Frameworks for Teachers:

Danielson's Framework: Charlotte Danielson's Framework, developed in 1995, is used to some extent in a majority of Vermont's schools. This approach involves more than simply observing classroom practice; it also takes into account dialogue between principal and educator as another artifact to use in assessing teaching effectiveness. It has been the subject of extensive research. Danielson's framework has a clear but complex rubric for observation, which means that it requires multiple classroom visits as well as evidence provided through teacher/student artifacts.

Marshall Framework: Kim Marshall's approach is broader; it includes supervision and evaluation and involves teachers in improving the performance of all students. However, some validity and reliability issues persist. Marshall provides no guidelines for training evaluators on his model, which could explain, in part, why reliability ratings are low. In addition, Marshall's summative rubrics use language that can be interpreted in many ways (e.g., the teacher uses silky-smooth transitions, the teacher is poised, alert, and dynamic) which raises questions about validity.

Marzano Framework: Robert Marzano's Causal Teacher Evaluation Framework includes walkthroughs, informal and formal observations that require a significant amount of administrator time. Marzano, who has long promoted the importance of formative assessment, has just begun using his formative tools in a summative way and translating formative information into a summative calculation. There is little research that addresses the validity and reliability of using formative-designed assessments for summative purposes.



McREL Evaluation System: The Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory, founded in 1966, began developing teacher and principal research-based evaluation systems in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and North Carolina Association of Educators. The evaluation system, which emphasizes professional growth, is designed to promote effective leadership, high quality teaching, and student growth and learning. It uses teacher self-assessment, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstrations that are all aligned to professional teaching standards. Its teacher leadership standards include teachers leading in their classrooms and schools as well as taking on leadership roles in the profession at large.



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Sample Frameworks for Principals/Leaders:

Evaluations of principals should be based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality's (NCCTQ) *Evaluating School Principals* document provides the following explanation.

Two valuable strategies that can be used to identify areas of improvement for individual administrators are through the use of formative and summative assessments. Formative and summative assessments for administrators serve a multitude of purposes. These assessments should be used by school districts to evaluate and assess potential areas for improvement for individual school principals in order to target professional development needs, and they should be as adaptable enough to take into account principal's workplace contexts (e.g., urbanicity, or poverty level).

Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED): This framework is an evidence-based approach to measure the effectiveness of school leadership behaviors known to influence teacher performance and student growth and learning. This framework comprises core components (refer to characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach) and key processes (refer to how leaders create those core components). The VAL-ED tool identifies six key steps or "processes" that an effective principal takes when carrying out his/her responsibilities.

1. Planning
2. Implementing
3. Supporting
4. Advocating
5. Communicating
6. Monitoring

The conceptual framework for VAL-ED is based on the alignment to ISLLC as well as grounded in a review of leadership research literature.

National Association of Elementary School Principal (NAESP): The six standards listed below are from the National Association of Elementary School Principals publication, *Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do*. In Vermont, we have used these standards as the basis for our principal mentoring program. They help principals set priorities and provide specific tools and resources for their learning community. Effective leadership and structure efforts within learning communities ensure that all students and adults learn and perform at high levels.

- Lead Student and Adult Learning
- Lead Diverse Communities
- Lead 21st Century Learning
- Lead Continuous Improvement
- Lead Using Knowledge and Data
- Lead Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Sample State Frameworks: Aligned with ISSLC, VAL-ED and NAEP:

- [Delaware](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [Washington](#)



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Indicators of Student Learning and Outcomes

Key elements include:

- Self-assessment and reflection, during which the educator rates his or her performance and identifies artifacts that validate the ratings
- Observations of practice by administrators and peers using a scoring rubric rated to the standards
- Examination of artifacts of practice by administrators and peers

Strength of Indicators

All measures have their own inherent strengths and weaknesses. Not all indicators are equally useful nor equally valid and reliable. Indicators should be selected based on the following:

- Ability to accurately measure student progress
- Demonstrated impact on student achievement
- Demonstrated impact on teacher and leader practice
- Processes are in place (or need to be) to ensure fidelity of the measure
- The measure is an accurate and fair indicator of what a student is supposed to know and be able to do
- The measure is an accurate and fair indicator of teacher and leader practice

Federal priorities (Secretary's Priorities for Discretionary Grant Programs, 2010) provide guidance on student growth measures stipulating that such measures must:

- Be rigorous
- Measure progress between two points in time
- Be comparable across classrooms

At the same time, these indicators must be valid and reliable for their intended purposes. In other words, the measure or assessment must accurately and fairly measure what the student is supposed to learn, whether the student learned the material, and how results can be attributed to individual teachers (Herman, Heritage, & Goldschmidt, 2011).

Measuring teacher practice through observations or a review of classroom artifacts requires trained raters so that the scores teachers receive are not dependent on who observes them or analyzes artifacts. Demonstrated validity and reliability within such measures also should guide the selection of artifacts.



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Evidence of Contributions to the School, District or Profession

As educators gain more experience and ability, their focus often becomes working not only with students, but also with the adults within the school community or profession. Evidence of contributions to the school, district or profession should be used to validate judgments about teachers and administrators (See Working with Multiple Indicators, p. 10).

EVALUATION STANDARDS

The Task Force developed standards for evaluation based on the *InTASC standards* for teachers and the *ISLLC standards* for administrators. These standards were adopted by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators in 2011. These standards will serve well as a guide for educators as they move through their careers. The evaluation process must have measurable criteria upon which evaluators make decisions as to the effectiveness of the educator. Measures of teacher and leader effectiveness need to be based on widely accepted standards of teaching and leading that attempt to capture a range of behaviors using multiple evaluation methods.

Vermont Teacher Evaluation Standards

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) is a set of model core teaching standards that outline what teachers should know and be able to do, ensuring that all students reach the goal of being college and career ready. Using the InTASC standards as a foundation, the following evaluation standards and functions will serve as the framework in supporting effective instruction.

Standard 1: The Learner and Learning

Teachers are committed to their students and their learning.

Functions:

1.1 Learner Development

- Demonstrates knowledge of student development

1.2 Learner Differences

- Connecting student's prior knowledge, life experiences and interests with individual learning goals

1.3 Learning Environments

- Establishing and maintaining a physical environment that engages all students in learning

Standard 2: Content

Teachers know the subject areas that they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Functions:

2.1 Content Knowledge

- Demonstrates knowledge of subject matter content

2.2 Application of Content

- Organizing curriculum to support of all students understanding of subject matter



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Standard 3: Instructional Practice

Teachers are responsible for managing, monitoring and improving student learning.

Functions:

3.1 Assessment

- Establishing and communicating learning goals for all students
- Uses multiple methods to assess student learning
- Uses results of assessments to guide instruction
- Communicates with students, families and other audiences about student growth

3.2 Planning for Instruction

- Developing, modifying and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning

3.3 Instructional Strategies

- Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse needs

Standard 4: Professional Responsibility

Teachers are members of learning communities.

Functions:

4.1 Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

- Establishing professional goals and pursuing professional learning opportunities to grow professionally
- Working with families, communities and colleagues to improve professional practice
- Reflecting on teaching practice

4.2 Leadership and Collaboration

- Maintaining professional standards guided by legal and ethical principles

Vermont Principal Evaluation Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) is a set of model core leadership standards that outline what principals should know and be able to do to assure all students reach the goal of being college and career ready. Not all areas of a principal's practice need to be or can be measured in an evaluation system. Using the ISLLC standards as a foundation, along with the VAL-ED and NAEPS frameworks, the following evaluation standards and elements will serve as the framework in supporting effective instruction.

Standard 1: Vision, Mission & Goals

Principals create conditions that enable schools to build on their core values and beliefs resulting in the attainment of 21st century skills for all.

Functions:

1.1 School Improvement Plan

- Provide and initiate the structure for the vision, mission and goals, based on data, to improve performance, school culture and school success

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning

Principals set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of all students and for staff professional growth.



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Functions:

2.1 Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

- Ensure the alignment of teaching, curriculum, instruction, and assessment to maximize student achievement

2.2 Culture of Collaboration

- Establish and monitor collaborative work environments

2.3 Instructional Time

- Design, implement, and monitors scheduling processes and protocols that maximize staff input and addresses individual student learning needs

2.4 Professional Learning

- Ensure that professional learning opportunities within the school are closely aligned with curriculum, instruction and assessment needs and recognizes the need for differentiated professional development

Standard 3: Managing Organizational Systems and Safety

Principals manage operations and resources to ensure safe, efficient and effective learning environments.

Functions:

3.1 School Resources and Budget

- Use feedback and data while ensuring the strategic allocation and equitable use of financial resources to meet instructional goals and support teacher needs

3.2 Distributed Leadership

- Create and provide opportunities for staff members to accept leadership and decision-making roles in the school and outside the school

3.3. Safety of Students and Staff

- Systemically monitor issues around compliance with expectations, structures, rules and expectations while utilizing staff and student input to resolve such issues

Standard 4: Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders

Principals actively engage parents, families and community members to create shared responsibility for student learning.

Functions:

4.1 Families, Caregivers and Community Partners

- Principals, teachers and staff work collaboratively with the community to create, align and sustain a partnership system of in-school and out-of school learning experiences

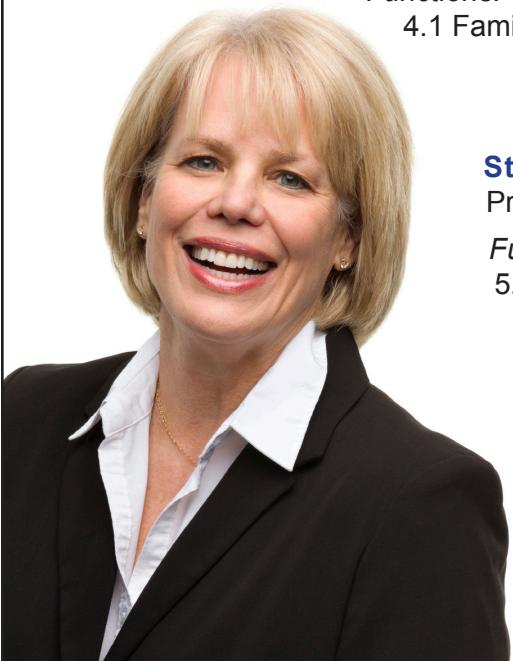
Standard 5: Ethics and Integrity

Principals are fair and active members of a professional learning community.

Functions:

5.1 Principals demonstrate ethical, culturally proficient and reflective leadership.

- Advocate and promote the diverse needs of students within and beyond the school
- Ensure the school community works within the framework of policies, laws and regulations enacted by local, state and federal authorities



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Standard 6: The Education System

Principals promote the success of all students by understanding the community within the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

Functions:

6.1 Political, Social, Economic, Legal and Cultural Context

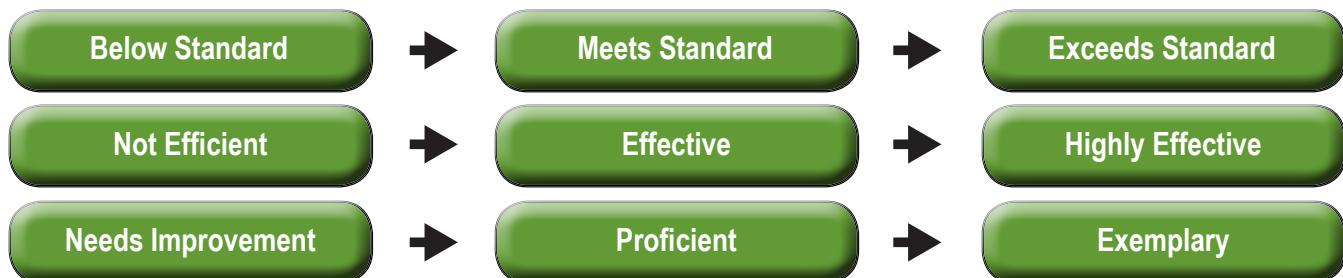
- Collaborates with service providers and other decision-makers to improve teaching and learning

LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

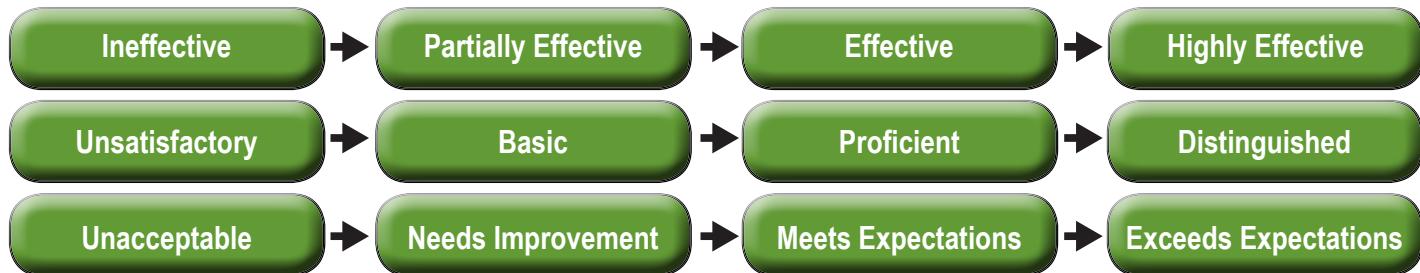
Research indicates that teacher and leader performance should be evaluated based on three or more levels of performance. The inclusion of leveled indicators is intended to guide discussion about effective leadership in order to recognize teacher and principal successes and challenges, and meet their professional needs. In the development of local evaluation systems, three or more levels of performance must be defined with specific criteria for each level and standard. The greater the number of levels in an evaluation system, the smaller the differences between those levels which means that evaluators must be highly skilled in their ability to understand and accurately distinguish the differences.

Sample Levels of Performance

Three Levels



Four Levels



WORKING WITH MULTIPLE INDICATORS

All indicators should be aligned to common standards/expectations. No one indicator can be used to effectively inform an educator's professional practice. Student test scores alone are not sufficiently reliable and valid indicators of teacher and leader effectiveness. Evaluations must be comprehensive and based on multiple indicators, to provide teachers and leaders with clear and actionable feedback to enhance their practice and must include the following components:

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Teacher Performance:

1. *The Learner and Learning:* A teacher understands individual development and learning patterns, individual differences of learners to the learning process, and the need for supportive and safe learning environments. Sample indicators:
 - a. Professional growth plans informed by student performance data
 - b. Analysis of video lessons
 - c. Standards-based unit and lesson plans
 - d. Student portfolios
 - e. Student growth scores
 - f. Analysis of student learning artifacts to inform instruction
 - g. Documentation of professional learning in pedagogy and/or subject area
 - h. Student and parent surveys
 - i. Supervisor and/or peer, informal and formal observations
2. *Content:* A teacher has a deep and flexible understanding of content area(s) and draws upon knowledge to assure learner mastery. Sample indicators:
 - a. Participating actively on content teams
 - b. Self-assessment
 - c. Continuing education/professional growth plans
 - d. Individual Professional Development Plan
 - e. Developing curriculum materials
 - f. Model unit and lesson plans
3. *Instructional Practice:* A teacher understands and integrates assessment, planning, and instructional strategies to support student learning. Sample indicators:
 - a. Professional growth plans informed by student performance data
 - b. Individual Professional Development Plan
 - c. School and/or district-based pre/post assessments tied to learning standards
 - d. Student portfolios or student projects
 - e. Student growth scores
 - f. Curriculum mapping
 - g. Supervisor and/or peer, informal and formal observations
 - h. Student and parent surveys
 - i. Self-assessment
4. *Professional Responsibility:* A teacher collaborates with learners, families, other school personnel and community members to meet the needs of all students. Sample indicators:
 - a. Professional growth plans tied to school initiatives
 - b. Individual Professional Development Plan
 - c. Professional portfolio/evidence binders
 - d. Self-assessment
 - e. Artifacts confirming contributions to school reform activities
 - f. Communication with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members
 - g. Participating in school and/or district committees
 - h. Service to local, state, and national professional education organizations
 - i. Supervision of student teachers



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Principal Performance:

1. *Vision, Mission & Goals:* A principal creates conditions that enable schools to build on their core values and beliefs. Sample indicators:
 - a. Vision and goal statements that establish high measurable expectations for all students and educators
 - b. Schedule of and meeting agendas
 - c. Staff, parent, and student surveys
 - d. Observations/evaluations, informal and formal
 - e. Regularly communicate vision, mission and goals
 - f. Handbooks (e.g. student, staff)
2. *Teaching and Learning:* A principal sets high expectations and standards for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of all students and for staff professional growth. Sample indicators:
 - a. Teacher retention rates
 - b. Evidence of effective support for new teachers and those on improvement plans
 - c. Staff, parent, and student surveys
 - d. Evidence of the fair and transparent application of teacher evaluations
 - e. Observations/evaluations, informal and formal
 - f. Student growth artifacts
 - g. Vision and goal statements that establish high measurable expectations for all students and educators
 - h. Self-assessment
3. *Managing Organizational Systems and Safety:* A principal manages operations and resources to ensure safe, efficient and effective learning environments. Sample indicators:
 - a. Mandatory report records
 - b. Staff, parent, and student surveys
 - c. Observations/evaluations, informal and formal
 - d. School Crisis Plan
 - e. Bullying and harassment data
 - f. Reports of compliance with state safety regulations
 - g. Handbooks (e.g. student, staff)
 - h. Maintenance plans
4. *Collaborating with Families and Stakeholders:* A principal actively engages parents, families and community members to create shared responsibility for student learning. Sample indicators:
 - a. Community, staff, parent, and student surveys
 - b. Communication logs, emails
 - c. Meeting notes
 - d. Community/school event planning
 - e. Action plan goals
 - f. Observations/evaluations, informal and formal
 - g. Family, community and school partnership plan
 - h. Self-assessment



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5. *Ethics and Integrity:* Principals are fair and active members of a professional learning community.
Sample indicators:
 - a. Community, staff, parent, and student surveys
 - b. Meeting notes
 - c. Goals reporting
 - d. Observations/evaluations, informal and formal
 - e. Participation in school activities
 - f. Self-assessment
6. *The Education System:* A principal promotes the success of all students by understanding the community within the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context. Sample indicators:
 - a. Community, staff, parent, and student surveys
 - b. Vision and goal statements that establish high measurable expectations for all students and educators.
 - c. Letters, awards, grants
 - d. Observations/evaluations, informal and formal
 - e. Service to local, state, and national professional education organizations
 - f. Public statements in advocacy for public education (e.g. legislature, blogs, VPA, etc.)

DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS & LEADERS

According to Linda Darling-Hammond, et.al, 2009, professional growth and evaluation are integrally related. Interconnected like gears, teacher and principal development and support, coupled with evaluation, provide the energy that moves the continuous improvement system forward. This “feedback loop” is the foundation of the system of continuous improvement. High quality professional learning holds great promise to support and improve teacher and principal practice and effectiveness over the long term.

[2012 Report on Act 20, Section 2e of 2011. An Act Relating to Providing Mentoring Support for Teachers, New Principals, and New Technical Center Directors.](#)

Mentoring New Teachers: Regardless of the quality or source of their preparation, beginning teachers encounter a steady stream of distinct challenges in their initial years in the classroom. Additionally new teachers are, on average, less effective than more experienced ones. High-quality induction programs can overcome this challenge by accelerating new teachers' professional growth and making them more effective faster. (NTC Policy Paper: Review of State Policies on Teacher Induction, 2012 p. v). According to the [Vermont State Board of Education, Manual of Rules and Practices, School Quality Standards](#), mentoring shall be a structured component of each school's needs-based professional development system.

Mentoring New Principals: When a school district hires a principal or a technical center director who has not been employed previously in that capacity, the superintendent serving the district, in consultation with the Vermont Principals' Association, shall work to ensure that the new principal or technical center director receives mentoring supports during at least the first two years of employment. [The Vermont Statutes, Title16: Education, Chapter 5, § 245 Principals: technical center directors: mentoring.](#)



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Peer Assistance: Peer assistance is a collaborative approach that focuses on enhancing teacher quality by using expert teachers as mentors for probationary or career teachers. Teachers receiving assistance may be new to teaching, be experienced teachers who are learning new skills, or be career teachers who need some additional support or feedback. Peer assistance relies on a cadre of trained, experienced teachers and leaders to provide mentoring, feedback, and guidance to their peers. Peer assistance consists of assistance, usually in the form of support, coaching, and professional learning. Peer assistance can be used in the formative evaluation cycle but should not be used as part of the summative evaluation. Peer assistants would work with their colleagues on an ongoing basis. This work would include:

- Discussions related to the self-assessment and the professional growth plan
- Observation of teachers and provide feedback
- Examination of artifacts using established protocols (e.g. professional learning communities, instructional rounds, etc.)
- Examination of student work as part of a reflective practice protocol
- Examination of student outcomes to inform instructional decision-making
 - **Resources supporting Peer Assistance:** Transforming Teacher Work for A Better Educated Tomorrow (Advance Illinois)
 - **Peer Review:** Getting Serious about Teacher Support and Evaluation (SRI International and J. Koppich & Associates)
 - **Teacher to Teacher:** Realizing the Potential of Peer Assistance and Review (Center for American Progress)

EVALUATION CYCLE

An effective teacher and principal evaluation cycle should be growth-oriented with measurable goals. Additionally, it should promote professional growth through an on-going collaborative effort that recognizes individual needs and is flexible in approach and choice in order to continually improve student learning.

Elements of an effective evaluation cycle will include:

- Professional Growth Plan
- Observation
- Data Collection
- Feedback
- Formative
- Summative
- Reflection
- Improvement Plans

Professional Growth Plan: The chief goal of professional growth plan is to help an educator improve practice that enhances student growth and learning. The professional growth plan is the key element to any effective evaluation system. Educators develop their plans in collaboration with other professionals to control their own professional learning and use these experiences toward continuous improvement.

Whenever possible, professional learning will be connected to the educator's professional growth plan.



Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

1. Goal Setting
 - Goals aligned with state, district, and school standards.
2. Description of professional learning activities
 - Professional Learning Communities
 - Instructional rounds
 - Coursework
 - Study groups
 - Curriculum development
 - Professional presentations
 - Mentoring
3. Methods for getting feedback
 - Peer observation
 - Supervisor observation
 - Walk-throughs
 - Surveys
4. Artifacts
 - Curriculum maps
 - Lessons/units
 - Presentation materials
5. Timeline
 - Goals revisited annually
 - Locally developed
6. Reflection
 - Professional dialogue
 - Video
 - Written reflections

Observation - Observations may be formal, which may include pre- and post-conferences, and informal, which may include walk-throughs and/or peer observations. Observations may be announced or unannounced. The frequency of observations is dependent upon where the educator is in the evaluation cycle. The observation instrument must be valid and reliable. Observers must be well-trained to use the instrument.

Data Collection - Both educator and evaluator are responsible for data collection which may include surveys, student work, artifacts, video observations, and assessment scores.



Feedback - A variety of stakeholders (e.g. students, parents, peers, administrators, evaluators) will provide feedback which the educator will synthesize and reflect upon to inform professional practice.

Formative - Evaluation meant to provide teachers with feedback on how to improve performance and what types of professional development opportunities will enhance their practice.

Summative - Evaluation used to make overall decisions on an educator's performance and that may inform personnel decisions.



Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

Reflection - Educators will contemplate their professional practice in a variety of ways: writing in journals, self-directed study, and informal conversations.

Improvement Plans: When an educator's performance is found to be ineffective at the end of an evaluation, an improvement plan will be developed. The intent of this process is to provide constructive assistance in targeted areas.

1. Goals based on demonstrated performance deficiencies identified by the evaluator
2. Description of exactly what the educator must do in order to improve practice
3. Description of prescribed professional learning activities connected directly to the diagnosed areas for improvement
4. Specific supervisory support to be provided to the educator
 - Locally developed
5. Description of artifacts that must be produced
 - Locally developed
6. Timeline for implementation
 - Benchmarks
 - Actions and/or artifacts will be evaluated at clearly defined intervals
 - Employment decision made

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Consideration of Agreements and Policies

Educators are accountable for high-quality instructional systems that advance student learning and growth. High-quality evaluation systems must be developed and implemented at the local level in collaboration with educators and their representatives, ensuring compliance with master agreements and district policies. See the [Vermont State Statutes Title 16 Chapter 57 Labor Relations for Teachers § 2004: Agenda.](#)

Quality Training for Teachers and Leaders

Transparent evaluation systems lead teachers and principals to have confidence in the outcomes which lead to improved teaching and student learning. Training skilled observers and evaluators is an essential component of effective evaluation systems. Guidelines to consider when developing an evaluation system include

- Teachers and leaders need to receive district-supported training in the standards, functions and elements of the evaluation cycle.
- Teachers and leaders must know the evaluation standards against which they are assessed and what constitutes their level of performance on these standards.
- Formative evaluations must be conducted frequently.
- Observers and evaluators must receive formal training and demonstrate the ability to assess teaching fairly and accurately.



Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

- Evaluators establish inter-rater reliability.
- Provide constructive feedback as a way of supporting continuous improvement.
- Collaboratively develop professional goals as part of the evaluation cycle.
- Formative and Summative evaluation data must inform professional learning opportunities for teachers.
- All probationary educators will be on an annual evaluation cycle.



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APPENDIX A: VERMONT TASK FORCE FOR TEACHER & LEADER EFFECTIVENESS (* Indicates Spring 2012 Task Force)

| Invitees | Professional Role | Representation |
|------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Lydia Alexander | Public Member | Kirby, Vermont |
| Martha Allen* | President | Vermont NEA |
| Ellen Baker | Education Department | University of Vermont |
| Stephanie Blouin | Curriculum Coordinator | Franklin Central SU |
| ErnestBroadwater | Education Department | Lyndon State College |
| Marta Cambra* | Director of Educator Quality | Vermont Department of Education |
| PennyChamberlin | Technical Center Director | Barre Technical Center |
| JohannahDonovan | Legislative Representative | Vermont Legislature |
| Mary Beth Doyle | Education Department Chair | St. Michael's College |
| Carol Duley | Coordinator of Prof. Development | Vermont Department of Education |
| Karin Edwards | Integrated Support for Learning | Vermont Department of Education |
| John Fischer | Integrated Support for Learning | Vermont Department of Education |
| Sherry Gile* | Professional Programs Director | Vermont NEA |
| Jay Hoffman | Technology Education Teacher | Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School |
| Evelyn Howard | Superintendent | Addison Northeast Supervisory Union |
| Jeff Isham | Teacher | Moretown Elementary School |
| Linda Kelley | Principal | Marion Cross School |
| Bill Kimball | Curriculum Coordinator | Orleans Southwest SU |
| MaryBethMcNulty | Educator Preparation Consultant | Vermont Department of Education |
| Fayneese Miller | SBE Chair | State Board of Education |
| Mary Moran | Superintendent, Rutland City SD | Vermont Superintendents Association |
| Kevin Mullin | Senate Representative | Vermont Legislature |
| Jay Nichols* | Board Member | ChamplainValleyEducatorDevelopmentCenter |
| Ken Page* | Executive Director | Vermont Principals Association |
| Herb Perez | Assistant Principal | Burlington High School |
| Bob Rosane | Superintendent | Franklin Central SU |
| Ronald Ryan* | Superintendent | Addison-Rutland Supervisory Union |
| Nicole Saginor | Superintendent | St. Johnsbury School District |
| Janet Steward | VSBPE Chair | VT Standards Board of Professional Educators |
| Debra Taylor | Superintendent | Rutland Central Supervisory Union |
| Gail Taylor | Research, Standards & Assessment | Vermont Department of Education |
| Don Tinney* | English Teacher | BFA St. Albans |
| Donna Waelter | Teacher | Blue Mountain Union |
| Darlene Worth | Coordinator | ChamplainValleyEducatorDevelopmentCenter |
| Susan Yesalonia* | Educator Licensing Specialist | Vermont Department of Education |

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

APPENDIX B: VERMONT STANDARDS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

DEFINITIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHER AND LEADER

Adopted December 2012

Definition of an Effective Teacher

An effective teacher promotes student success by:

1. Ensuring that his/her students learn as evidenced by multiple measures of growth in achievement (*Academic Learning*)
2. Contributing to positive outcomes for students, including academic, attitudinal and social behaviors (*Other Learning Outcomes*)
3. Planning and structuring engaging learning opportunities; monitoring student progress formatively, continuously adapting or modifying instruction based on student data; and evaluating learning using multiple sources of evidence (*Instructional Practice*)
4. Promoting and advancing diversity, respect, and civic-mindedness in classrooms and schools (*Positive Learning Environments*)
5. Collaborating with other teachers, administrators, parents, and education professionals to ensure the success of every student, particularly those with special needs and/or at high risk for failure (*Collaboration*)
6. Engaging in on-going self-reflection and professional development to improve his/her knowledge and skills as a teacher (*Reflective Practice*)

Definition of an Effective School Leader

An effective educational leader promotes student success by:

1. Ensuring that all students in the school learn as evidenced by multiple measures of growth in achievement (*Academic Learning*)
2. Developing and implementing, with the greater school community, a vision for 21st century learning that promotes success for all students, with specific recognition of their diverse needs and backgrounds (*Vision*)
3. Leading the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced instructional program that is research-based and includes appropriate supports for each student and shared responsibility for the success of every student (*Instructional Leadership*)
4. Managing the organization, operations, and resources to ensure a safe, respectful, efficient, and effective learning environment for all (*School Climate/Culture*)
5. Selecting, supervising, and evaluating staff and providing the necessary supports in order to ensure that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success and are contributors to the school vision (*Teacher Development*)
6. Engaging in on-going self-reflection and professional development to improve his/her knowledge and skills as a leader (*Reflective Practice*)

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

A variety of resources have been used to develop this glossary.

A

Analysis of classroom or instructional artifacts - The use of a consistent protocol to analyze artifacts such as lesson plans, assessments, assignments, rubrics, and student work.

Artifacts - Artifacts are samples of student, teacher or principal work that demonstrate knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions related to a standard or goal.

Assessment - Assessment is the productive process of monitoring, measuring, evaluating, documenting, reflecting on, and adjusting teaching and learning to ensure students reach high levels of achievement.

Assessment systems - Assessment systems need to include both formative and summative processes, aligned with instructional and curricular goals and objectives. Formative assessment findings should be used as a continuous feedback loop to improve teaching and learning. Summative assessment results should be used to make final decisions about gains in knowledge and skills.

B

C

Classroom Observations - Observation of classroom teaching practice by trained observers/evaluators.

Comparable Across Classrooms - Means that the same locally selected measures of student achievement or growth are used across a subject and/or grade level with the school district or supervisory union.

D

Data - Learner data are factual, evidentiary forms of information about individuals or groups of learners that are collected, documented, organized, and analyzed for the purpose of making decisions about teaching and learning.

Data Usage - Using data in instructional decision making is a continuous, cyclical process of making instructional decisions based on the analysis of learner data. Using data to inform instructional decisions involves key processes-assessing, analyzing, planning, implementing, and reflecting. Data-informed instructional decision making uses data from multiple sources to understand learning strengths and needs in order to suggest classroom and school-wide instructional solutions.

E

Effective - Means an educator is performing at the level identified in the evaluation criteria.

Element - Describes the desired knowledge, skills, actions, and behaviors of teachers and principals that advance a particular standard. Elements define what teachers and principals do in the classroom/school.

Evaluation - Judgment about an educator's performance based on established criteria and protocols and focused on improvement of practice.

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

Evaluation Framework - A three-prong evaluation framework that uses multiple sources of data to confirm and validate conclusions about an educator's practice or performance.

Evaluator - Evaluator is a role that gives feedback to teachers or leaders, as well as constructive criticism and helpful tips for improvement.

Evidence - Refers to the data, information, artifacts and performances that educators and evaluators review in order to accurately assess or determine effectiveness. The evidence should be judged against specific criteria or standards, elements, and performance indicators.

F

Feedback - Reaction and response related to performance.

Formal Observation - Observation of an educator's practice using established criteria and protocols, often including a pre- and post-observation conference between the educator and the evaluator.

Formative Assessment - Evaluation meant to provide teachers and principals with feedback on how to improve performance and what types of professional learning opportunities will enhance their practice.

Framework for 21st Century Learning - The Framework for 21st Century Learning consists of core subjects and themes that revolve around three core skills: life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information media, and technology skills. These are the skills that students need in order to be successful in the 21st century.

G

Growth Model - Means to measure the change in the performance of students on specified assessments over time.

H

Highly Effective - Means an educator is performing at a higher level than typically expected based on the evaluation criteria.

I

Indicators - Guides for performance.

Induction - The practices and strategies through which initially licensed educators are introduced to the standards of the profession (knowledge, skills, dispositions), to the responsibilities they are hired to fulfill, and to strategies for collectively engaging in continual professional growth.

Ineffective - Refers to an educator whose performance is unacceptable based on the evaluation criteria.

Instructional Rounds - A form of classroom walk-through (adapted from the medical rounds model) that involves educators and administrators and includes protocols and processes for observing, analyzing, discussing and understanding instruction to develop knowledge and norms of practice.

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

Inter-Rater Reliability - The extent to which two or more individuals (coders or raters) agree. Interrater reliability addresses the consistency of the implementation of a rating system. Ongoing training for all evaluators on the use of an evaluation tool or protocol is one way to ensure continuous inter-rater reliability.

J
K
L

Leader - School Principal

Levels of Performance - One or more defined dimensions that serve as the basis for evaluating educator performance.

M

Measures of Performance - A collection of information regarding the performance of an individual.

Mentor - Mentors are experienced educators who have demonstrated high quality instructional practice and who are trained in mentoring to provide consistent individual guidance and support.

Mentoring - Mentoring is a structured program that pairs a mentor with an educator who is either new to the profession or new to the school, in order to provide training, orientation, assistance and support that fosters student learning.

N
O

Observation Instrument - Tool for recording information that can be used to analyze teaching methods and the instructor's interactions with students in the classroom.

Outcomes - Evidence of the impact of an educator's practice, which could include demonstration of student learning or behaviors.

P

Peer Assistance - Both new and experienced teachers benefit from professional support provided by other classroom teachers. Peer assistance describes activities planned and implemented by the Consulting Teacher in collaboration with the participating teacher and the supervising administrator. The activities shall be designed to strengthen the participating teacher's skill and expertise in accordance with the VSBPE's Standards for the Teaching Profession, and align to District approved goals and objectives, classroom management, planning and designing lessons for all students, assessment of student progress toward established standards and appropriate learning environment.

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

Performance Indicator - Describes the observable and measurable aspects of teaching practice for a particular element of a teaching standard. Performance indicators describe how teachers accomplish the actions and behaviors performed in the classroom.

Professional Development - Professional development provides comprehensive, sustained, and intensive learning opportunities to expand the professional knowledge base available to teachers and to engage them in an ongoing process of critically examining their teaching practices to find new and more effective ways to improve student learning. Professional development needs to address both an individual teacher's goals for professional growth and the larger organizational learning priorities for school improvement. Professional learning engages teachers in working with others to deepen their content knowledge, sharpen their instructional skills, and develop their ability to use data for meaningful decision making. Thus, professional learning is ongoing, job-embedded process that supports transfer of newly-learned knowledge and skills to practice. Such learning also needs to be continuously evaluated and refined.

Professional Growth Plans - Teachers design a plan that is based data collections from multiple sources; from self-assessment and classroom observation results to information from student learning and achievement projects. Teachers use this data to inform their professional development planning and analysis.

Professional Learning Communities - A professional learning community (PLC) is an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues often used in schools as a way to organize teachers into working groups.

Q

R

Reflection - Thoughtful consideration of performance.

Reliability - Reliability is the extent to which results reflect consistent aspects of a teacher's practice and not the idiosyncrasies of a particular observer, group of students, or lesson.

Rigorous - means that locally selected measures are aligned to the VSBPE state teaching standards and to the extent practicable, are valid and reliable.

S

Self-Assessment - A standards-based process with rubrics on which the educator rates his/her performance at the beginning of the year and periodically through the evaluation cycle, using artifacts as evidence of self-ratings.

Significant - Has a considerable, important or meaningful role in the educator's evaluation.

Standards - The knowledge and skills teachers are expected to demonstrate.

Student Achievement - The status of subject-matter knowledge, understandings, and skills at one point in time. For non-tested grades and subjects: alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-test and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Vermont Guidelines for Teacher & Leader Effectiveness

Student Growth - The change in an individual student's performance over time. Each student's change in performance is compared to the change in performance of other students who have a similar test score history.

Student Learning - Growth in subject-matter knowledge, understandings, and skills over time. It is student learning-not student achievement-that is most relevant to defining and assessing accomplished teaching.

Summative Assessment - Summative assessment is the process of certifying learning at the culmination of a given period of time to evaluate the extent to which instructional objectives have been met. Examples of summative assessment include end-of-unit tests, final exams, semester exams, portfolios, capstone projects, performance demonstrations, state-mandated tests, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), and accountability measures (e.g., Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP).

Summative Evaluation - Evaluation used to make overall decisions on educator's performance and that may inform personnel decisions such as assignments, transfers, PTS or dismissal.

T

Teacher - A person hired to prepare effective curriculum and instruction for preK-12 students so they can learn and grow.

Teacher Leader - A teacher leader is a teacher who assumes formally or informally one or more of a wide array of leadership roles to support school and student success. Examples of roles include instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, classroom supporter, learning facilitator, mentor, school leader (e.g., serving on a school committee, acting as a grade-level or department chair, supporting school initiatives, or representing the school on community or district task forces or committees), data coach, catalyst for change, resource provider, or learner. Teacher leaders model continual improvement, demonstrate lifelong learning, and use what they learn to help students achieve.

Teacher Leadership - Teacher leadership is the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.

U

V

Validity - Means that scores obtained from an instrument (test) represent what they are intended to represent. Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. For example, if a test is designed to measure achievement, then scores from the test really do represent various levels of achievement.

W

Walk-through - When an evaluator walks into a classroom at any time for the purpose of evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom.

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APPENDIX D: EXCERPT FROM THE ACT 20 STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

Induction-With-Mentoring: Increasing Student Learning By Improving Teaching. The Report of the Act 20 Study Committee on Teacher Induction Mentoring

In 2011, the Vermont Legislature passed Act No. 20: *An act relating to providing mentoring support for teachers, new principals, and new technical center directors.* As a result of the legislation, the ACT 20 Study Committee was formed in July 2011, “to study how the education profession inducts and mentors new teachers and to recommend legislative changes that would help new teachers to develop strong skills in their initial years and that would increase the retention of high-quality teachers.” The committee met during the late summer and fall of 2011 and completed its work in January 2012. The committee has concluded that the 2005 teacher induction and mentoring guidelines established by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE), as well as 2006 School Quality Standards adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education, incorporate most best practices identified in the research literature. Furthermore, many supervisory unions and supervisory districts have established induction and mentoring programs. Of the 143 principals who responded to our survey (45% response rate), 80% reported that their school did have some form of a mentoring program for teachers with less than three years experience. However, 20% percent of respondents reported that their school had no formalized mentoring system. (See Appendix B for survey results) We, therefore, offer the following three recommendations regarding teacher induction-with-mentoring practices for the state of Vermont:

Recommendation 1

The 2005 teacher induction and mentoring guidelines established by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, as well as the 2006 School Quality Standards regarding teacher induction and mentoring adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education should be strengthened by combining them into a single set of state standards and aligning them with all current best practices.

Recommendation 2

Induction-with-mentoring programs should be implemented and monitored by the supervisory unions and supervisory districts, and the unions and districts should incorporate data regarding induction-with-mentoring programs into existing, annual reporting procedures.

Recommendation 3

The Vermont Department of Education in collaboration with educational associations should develop statewide recommendations for sustainable funding of induction-with-mentoring programs. Simply put, there is good work going on in Vermont schools regarding the induction and mentoring of new teachers. But, to fulfill our commitment to serve all students, we must clarify, better support, and more closely monitor the implementation of best practice.

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